FROZEN FOOD PRODUCT WITH TOPPING

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The invention relates to topping compositions and to packaged food products containing a frozen food product and a topping composition.

BACKGROUND

[0002] A variety of dough products, batter products, and similar food products, are desirable to consumers, including dough products with toppings or fillings such as donuts, strudels, pastries, etc. While consumers desire food with appealing taste and texture, they also desire food products that are simple and easy to prepare and consume, and food products sold in combination with toppings such as frostings, syrups, or sauces, are very popular these days. With respect to ease of preparation, consumers enjoy food products that can be stored for long periods of time, e.g., by refrigeration or freezing, and that can be quickly reheated and consumed. To this end, food products that are sold and stored at a reduced temperature and that can be warmed or heated in an oven or toaster, can be highly desirable.

[0003] Food products such as dough and batter products can include optional fillings or toppings, for example a sweetened icing topping. Toppings are often applied to a food product after warming the food product, e.g., in a toaster, microwave, or conventional oven. For instance, donuts, strudels, or breakfast pastries often include a sweet topping or icing that is applied after warming the food product. The icing can for convenience be individually packaged along with the food product, and stored at low-temperature (e.g., 0 to 32° F.). While the donut, strudel, or pastry is being warmed, the icing remains close to its storage temperature, but is desirably ready for consumption as soon as the food product is suitably warmed. As such, preferred icings, in addition to having desirable flavor and texture, etc., should be capable of being applied to a food product shortly after removal from a low temperature environment, but should also not be too runny at room temperature.

[0004] There is a need for flavorful food products, including toppings, that can be stored for lengthy periods, and are convenient to prepare and eat.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] The invention relates to packaged food products that include a frozen food product and a topping, wherein the packaged food product can be stored at reduced temperatures, and wherein the frozen food product (also referred to herein as the "food product") optionally after being warmed or thawed, can be dipped in the topping to apply the topping to the food product soon after the topping is removed from reduced-temperature storage.

[0006] Preferred food products can comprise a batter product or dough product. The dough or batter product can preferably by partially-cooked or fully-cooked, and frozen; cooking can be accomplished, e.g., by baking, boiling, frying, deep frying, using a griddle, or any other method. A preferred dough or batter product can be any of a very wide variety of such products that can be consumed with a topping. The dough or batter product can be prepared from standard dough or batter ingredients, including combinations of flour, water, optional yeast, shortening, etc. These ingredients can be processed by combining and mixing some or all of them into a dough or batter composition, as is known, and processing into a cooked dough or batter product. For dough products in particular, a dough composition can be processed by sheeting, cutting, and forming a dough composition into a desired product shape or configuration (optionally including a filling). The cut and shaped configuration can be at least partially cooked and then frozen and packaged for sale to consumers.

[0007] The frozen food product can be consumed either while it is still cold or frozen, or after cooking, partially cooking, thawing, or warming, e.g., in an oven (conventional or microwave), a toaster, a toaster oven, or the like. Preferred food products can be of a size and shape that will fit into a toaster, e.g., a donut or donut-like product, for example, in the shape of donut sticks, e.g., multiple donut sticks connected by a line of weakening. The food product and the topping can be sold together, in combination, as a packaged, frozen or refrigerated food product.

[0008] Preferred toppings have a sufficiently low freezing point such that the topping can be easily applied to the dough product soon after removal from reduced-temperature storage in a refrigerator or freezer. Specifically, if a quantity of the topping, taking into consideration the amount and its packaging, is exposed to room temperature for the time that it takes to warm the food product, the topping will be sufficiently fluid that the food product (whether frozen, thawed, or warmed) can be dipped into the topping to apply to the topping to the food product. For example, an icing may have reduced melting and freezing temperatures such that the icing can be preferably applied to a food product by dipping the food product into a small container of the icing. While other modes of application are also possible, application by dipping means that a consumer will be able to use their fingers to bring the food product into contact with the topping to allow or cause the topping to adhere to the food product and the food product and topping can be eaten together. Dipping can include simply bringing a food product into contact with a fluid topping, which preferably means that the topping is sufficiently fluid to allow a food product to be submerged or immersed in the topping. Depending on the surface composition of the food product, the topping may adhere to and remain on the food product for consumption. To facilitate application of the topping to the food product, and possibly to increase adhesion of the topping to the food product, it is also contemplated that the food product can be used by the consumer to scoop the topping from the container.

[0009] Toppings with preferred fluidity can have a viscosity that allows application of the topping to a food product by dipping. Exemplary viscosities can be in the range from about 500,000 to about 100,000,000 centipoise (cps) at a temperature of 0° F., e.g., from about 1,000,000 to about 10,000,000, preferably from about 1,000,000 to about 3,000,000, or about 5,000,000, measured using a Rheometrics Differential Stress Rheometer (DSR). Preferred toppings can also have a melting point in the range from about minus 34 to minus 25° C. Melting point can be measured by known methods such as differential scanning calorimetry (DSC).

[0010] The invention can be applied to toppings formulated for any variety of uses, and can be of any flavor or for